

GREENSBORO PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, October 8, 2008 – 4:00pm
Lewis Recreation Center – 3110 Forest Lawn Drive

PRESENT: Carl Brower, Jr., Paul Brown, Ken Free, Lori Galbreath, David Hoggard, Rose Marie Ponton

ABSENT: Marc Bush

STAFF PRESENT: Kristen Barbee, Steve Branson, Candice Bruton, Kathy Cates, Jenny Caviness, Martha Cook, Phil Hardin, Kelly Hicks, John Hughes, Charles Jackson, Lynne Leonard, Bonnie Kuester, Mary Alice Kurr-Murphy, Dan Maxson, Mike Moye, Darius Oliver, Marcie Richardson, Larry Smith, Laurie Thore, Bernadette White, Chris Wilson

The regular meeting of the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Commission was held at Lewis Recreation Center. Rose Marie Ponton called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 10, 2008 Commission Meeting were approved as submitted.

Recognition

Bonnie Kuester, Director, recognized the Parks and Recreation October Employee of the Month, Kelly Hicks.

Lewis Recreation Center Presentation

Phil Hardin, Lewis Center Director, presented the Commission with events and programs currently held at the center.

OLD BUSINESS

Farmer's Market Policy

David Hoggard, Commissioner and Farmer's Market Policy Sub-Committee Member, reported that the Farmer's Market Policy Sub-Committee met on September 16, 2008. All public input from the previous Commission meeting was considered during the revision process of the Farmer's Market Policy. Recently these policies have been more strictly enforced and have caused some animosity amongst vendors and customers; therefore a sub-committee of the Commission was formed to review the policy. The sub-committee recommended adding definitions of farmers, agent, and food and craft artisans. Regional/local has been clearly identified as adjoining states; North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, and South Carolina. Products and vendors must come from these areas. The mission statement was slightly revised. The "huckster" rule was eliminated. The sub-committee agreed that the variance to sell mechanism would suffice as a vehicle for vendors to sale certain products during the off season or when produce is scarce. The sub-committee also recommended that the policy needed to state that approved non-local items must be labeled. Vendors would need to submit specific complaints in writing to the Market Management. Market Management was defined. There were slight revisions made to the Application for Variance to Sell. Hoggard stated that the Market will continue to give first priority to farmers, second priority to artisans and food vendors, and third priority to craft vendors.

Carl Brower Jr., Commissioner and Sub-Committee Member, stated that permits will be strictly enforced.

Paul Brown, Commissioner, inquired if items from non-local states would be given a variance.

Hoggard replied stating non-local items would perhaps be given a variance in cases when it is off season or when produce is scarce.

Action Taken

A motion was made by David Hoggard and seconded by Paul Brown to adopt the Farmer's Market Policy with the sub-committee's recommended revisions. A vote in favor was unanimous.

The following questions were asked from the floor in reference to the Farmer's Market Policy:

Ruth Foster, customer, inquired about coffee and tea being sold at the Market that is not grown in NC. Foster stated that she does not see consistency with the policy.

Lynne Leonard, Farmer's Market Coordinator, replied stating that coffee and tea are permitted at the Market for customers to enjoy while they shop. Market Management will review this issue.

Ponton added that she believes the coffee and tea are sold as a courtesy to visitors to have something to drink.

Kathy Cates, Greensboro Beautiful Coordinator, stated that the tea and coffee creates an atmosphere for visitors to stay longer.

Hoggard stated that he believes the coffee is blended by Carolina Coffee which is a local company.

A citizen stated that he was granted a variance to sell cheese made in Ashe County and his variance was pulled once new management took place because his cheese had to be sent to Wisconsin to age for one year. The Wisconsin state law requires that the cheese must have the Wisconsin stamp on it when it leaves the state. The citizen also stated that there is only one produce farmer on the Farmer's Market Advisory Board and would be more inclined to listen to the Board if there were more farmers serving.

Ponton stated that Market Management will need to re-examine this citizen's request.

Wilson requested that the citizen send documentation that the cheese is made in Ashe County as was previously requested a couple of weeks prior to the Commission meeting.

Anna Lane stated that she was informed there would be a certain percentage of customers on the Advisory Board to discuss these issues. Lane expressed concern regarding the public not having the opportunity to give input in Market decisions.

Ponton replied stating that the public had the opportunity to give input at the previous Commission meeting. Having a percentage of the public give input towards Market policies may have been discussed, but the Commission did not approve who could serve on the Board.

Ken Free, Commissioner, added that the public may take their concerns to the Farmer's Market Advisory Board.

Leonard stated that the Advisory Board was established a number of years ago primarily to be a voice for the vendors and for them to advise Market Management. Vendors hear comments from customers then vendors communicate these comments to management. A list of vendors serving on the Advisory Board is posted in the Market and customers may see any of those members to express concerns.

John Hammer, vendor, inquired how the new rules will be enforced since they have not previously been enforced and what to do if they are not.

Ponton replied stating that the Market is under new management and the rules have been clarified. Ponton stated that if the rules are not enforced to inform the Commission.

Mary Hess, vendor, thanked the sub-committee and Commission for their efforts on this issue.

Kuester stated that staff believes the Market will see improvement. Kuester gave assurance that staff will make every effort in making sure that the rules are enforced fairly. The Commission spent a lot of time making sure there are a good set of rules so that staff can do so. There are a number of venues where concerns can be expressed. Change in the composition of the Advisory Board would be supported if needed; however it is up to the vendors to make sure they are nominating the right vendors to the board so that right decisions are made. It is a Farmer's Curb Market and that is why there is an Advisory Board of vendors and not citizens.

Jay Royal, customer, stated that he visits the Market every week and has bought from every vendor there from one time to another and will continue to do so. Royal expressed concern that the vendors are not getting along.

DJ Switzer, vendor, expressed concern that the farmers are not getting along.

75th Anniversary Update

This item was presented later during the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Cemetery Fees

Mike Moyer, Cemeteries Superintendent, informed the Commission that there has not been a cemetery fee increase since July 2005. Fee comparisons were conducted with Durham, Raleigh, Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Guilford Memorial Park, Lakeview, and Westminster Gardens. The fee increase proposal does not include changing the sale prices for cemetery property or week day prices. The increase proposal targets late arriving and weekend services due to the impact of labor and operations. Raleigh and Winston-Salem no longer allow services on Sunday. The proposed change is very consistent with market prices. The increases would continue to be the least expensive in Guilford County and other municipalities. The proposed fee increases were posted on the website for approximately three weeks and positive feedback was received from local funeral homes. Funeral homes are in support of the increase because they prefer not to have Sunday funerals. Moyer requested that the Commission approve the proposed fee increases and to also recommend City Council approval.

Brower, Jr., inquired about cemetery employees earning compensation and will they be paid overtime with the fee adjustment.

Moyer replied stating that the City does not pay overtime; however employees accrue compensation time. The fee adjustments are designed to be a deterrent for having services after 4:30pm. This past month there have been four occasions where funerals were scheduled at 1:00pm that arrived at the cemetery after 4:30pm which did not allow staff to leave work until 6:30pm.

Action Taken

A motion was made by Lori Galbreath and seconded by Carl Brower, Jr., to approve the cemetery fees increase and recommended City Council approval. A vote in favor was unanimous.

Reasons to Rhyme

Mary Alice Kurr-Murphy, City Arts Director, introduced Josephus Thompson, City Arts employee and poet. Kurr-Murphy stated that Thompson has been working on a year long project for City Arts to provide more types of recreation and entertainment to the entire community. Kurr-Murphy turned the presentation over to Thompson.

Thompson informed the Commission that he is proposing the Reasons to Rhyme program to be held February-October 2009. This would give the community an opportunity to experience, hear, and see poetry. The program is

currently looking for supporters, sponsors, and collaborators. Thompson stated the he welcomes input and ideas. This program will be free and open to the public and conducted at various locations such as Triad Stage, Guilford College, and Festival Park. Thompson stated that he has been working with school systems using poetry as an educational tool as poetry is a part of school curriculums. Thompson stated that during June, July, and August of 2009, part of the program's mission will be for poets to visit recreation centers and perform to children.

Kurr-Murphy stated that in addition to performing, the poets will help kids with their reading and writing skills. Reading and writing is recreation as much as it is education. Kurr-Murphy invited the Commission to Reason to Rhyme meetings and educational sessions.

75th Anniversary Update

Bernadette White, Project Coordinator, thanked those that come to the 75th Anniversary Retiree and Commission Reception on October 3, 2008. White stated that as part of the 75th Anniversary celebrations the department will participate in the Greensboro Christmas parade. The spring/summer Leisure Guide will offer discounts and list 75th Anniversary events. A Parks and Recreation day will be held in June at the Grasshopper's game in Newbridge Bank Park. A historical display will be located at the Central Library July-October 2009. White turned the presentation over to Jenny Caviness, GYC Coordinator.

Caviness stated that photos have been gathered across the department to have a historical display outside of the Tannenbaum/Sternberger room at the Central Library. There will be display cases having historical items to highlight the past 75 years.

White returned stating that the 75th Anniversary celebrations will end in October 2009 with a day in the park at Country Park, who will also be celebrating their 75th Anniversary. White introduced the 75th Anniversary committee members who were present; Jenny Caviness, Charles Jackson, Kristen Barbee, Martha Cook, Laurie Thore, and Steve Branson. White then presented the Commission with a PowerPoint presentation that included a message from the Director and information regarding the departments the past 75 years.

White thanked Darious Oliver for his efforts with the PowerPoint presentation. White invited the Commission to a 75th Anniversary Reception immediately following the meeting.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

- NONE -

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Kuester stated that this department has much to celebrate. Times are difficult and the department needs the Commission more than ever to be a part of the team to help the department continue to serve as it has over the last 75 years. Kuester commended staff for their efforts and thanked the Commission for their support.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Lori Galbreath thanked Kuester and staff for hosting the 75th Anniversary Retiree and Commission Reception. Galbreath stated the she submitted an editorial to the News & Record in support of the bond regarding Smith Senior Center and it was published on October 3, 2008.

Paul Brown encouraged everyone to register to vote, vote early, and vote for the Parks and Recreation bond. Brown thanked staff for their assistance with the Center City Park event held on October 5, 2008. Brown stated that he will volunteer be a judge in Ghoulash!.

Ken Free thanked staff for their efforts regarding the 75th Anniversary Retiree and Commission Reception. Free stated that the past 75 years have been well spent and commended staff for their continued efforts.

David Hoggard apologized for not attending the Center City Park event. Hoggard stated that he will volunteer as a judge at Ghoulash!. Hoggard stated that he visited the Farmer's Market three Saturdays and that the Market is in need of policy enforcement. Hoggard thanked Lynne Leonard and Kathy Cates for their efforts with the Market.

A suggestion from the floor was heard to place a suggestion box at the Market.

Carl Brower, Jr. made a recommendation to conduct a presentation to neighborhood organizations that would inform them of the past 75 year's accomplishments and the Parks and Recreation bond. They should also be informed of what the department is currently doing and what is going to be done in the future.

Rose Marie Ponton thanked staff for all of their efforts and for the information given to the Commission on the bond and thanked Commission Members for their efforts and support with the bond. Ponton also thanked Bernadette White on her efforts with the 75th Anniversary.

With no further business Ponton adjourned the meeting at 5:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcie Richardson, Executive Assistant
Greensboro Parks and Recreation